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ABSTRACT

In a study designed to discover and describe the transmission of cultural meaning among women in middle management positions, oral histories of 10 middle management women were tape-recorded. The tapes were then transcribed and statements referring to the subjects' organizational enculturation were transferred onto approximately 500 sort cards. Through cue sorting, analysis of data resulted in 14 themes in 5 categories that concerned messages the subjects received from, sent to, or heard about (1) the organization, (2) superiors, (3) subordinates, (4) peers, and (5) themselves. Among other things, the analysis revealed that an attractive appearance was meaningful within organizations, that women used intuition to make many of their decisions within the organizational setting, and that metacomplementary communication strategies were used by the women to gain control of what goes on in their organizations. (The interview protocol and two pages of references are included.) (HOD)

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MIDDLE MANAGEMENT WOMEN:
CHANGES IN ATTITUDE, CHANGES IN LATITUDE

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Abstract

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Qualitative investigations of organizational communication are rare. Interest in gender research is relatively new and growing. This investigation draws qualitative investigations of organizations and gender research together by looking at the enculturation of women into middle management positions.

Oral histories of ten middle management women were gathered and tape recorded. Next, the tapes were transcribed. Finally, statements referring to the subjects' organizational enculturation were transferred onto approximately five hundred sort cards. Through cue sorting, analysis of data resulted in fourteen themes in five categories.

The five categories concerned messages subjects received from, sent to, or heard about (1) the organization, (2) superiors, (3) subordinates, (4) peers, and (5) themselves. Because of space considerations, and its relation to gender research, category five is the topic of this paper. Major themes within this category are middle management women's use of (1) appearances, (2) intuition, and (3) meta-complementary communication strategies during and after organizational and enculturation. Implications are discussed and suggestions for future research made.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT WOMEN:

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More and more women are advancing into middle management positions in organizations. This change in the makeup of members at the middle management level is relatively new. Therefore, there are no bases for making hypotheses about the impact on women of enculturation into middle management positions. Thus, the purpose of my investigation was to begin to define how middle management women described their experiences during their initial exposure to the organizations as middle managers. In this paper I will overview the methods and procedures I used, present four of the major findings, and discuss the implications.

Methods and Procedures

I. A. Richards said, "Whatever we may be studying we do it through the growth of our meaning" (1965, p. 19). The purpose of this study is to discover and describe the transmission of cultural meaning as it passes between organizational members. What methods and procedures were available and appropriate for making this discovery? Hoopes (1979, p. 47) provides a preliminary consideration:

Culture, being knowledge, ideas, attitudes and values, is complex, and the study of culture therefore requires careful, detailed description, "thick description," as one anthropologist has put it.

Thus, the selection of research tools and analysis of data had to adhere to a fundamental requirement; that is, an attempt was made to preserve the

wealth of meaning intended by the subjects. The methods and procedures used to accomplish this goal were: (1) Critical Incidents Technique, developed by John Flanagan (1949 & 1954), and (2) Memorable Messages Technique, a perspective advanced by Mark Knapp, Cynthia Stohl and Kathleen Reardon (1981) and further tested by Stohl (1983).

The critical incidents I gathered were defined as follows: An incident was labelled as critical for the purposes of this investigation when it had an effect on the beliefs and/or behaviors of the individual observing it.

This perspective is somewhat similar to one presented in an article by Flanagan. He explains it as follows:

By an incident is meant any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects (1954, p. 327).

To be precise, "the incident" included not only those happenings that were observed but also those which were heard about and had an effect as well. Notice that the CIT captures only behaviors and not beliefs. Laing (1971, p. 28) cautions that, "If one says that all one is interested in is the study of behavior 'pure and simple' then one is not studying persons." Another method was employed in this investigation, "memorable messages," to increase the breadth of the information gathered.

Memorable Messages Technique (MMT) was developed by Knapp, et al (1981) in an attempt to learn about messages that seemed to have significant impact on people's lives. Since that time, one of the co-investigators, Cynthia Stohl (1983) utilized the MMT to begin to understand the process of organizational

enculturation. What exactly are "memorable messages?" According to Stohl (1983, p. 5), "Memorable messages are those messages which are remembered for long periods of time and perceived to have had a major and continuing influence on individuals' lives."

Knapp, et al (1981) and Stohl (1983) used a questionnaire based interview process for collecting the data for their investigations. In the Knapp, et al study there were ten items on the questionnaire which took approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The Stohl questionnaire was an adapted version of the Knapp, et al questionnaire and took approximately thirty minutes to complete. Although interviews were employed in both investigations the amount of time allotted per subject was constraining. A lack of time may have prevented the interviewees from expanding upon their experience. This, in turn, may have prevented the acquisition of vivid descriptions of the incidents and messages affecting the subjects. The CIT lacked breadth, that is, it did not take feelings or beliefs into account; the MMT lacked depth, that is, it did not provide quality as much as quantity responses from the subjects. These methods, when combined and placed within the rubric of oral histories as a procedure, provided both the breadth and depth desired.

Oral Histories

What precisely is an "oral history?" An "Oral history is the recollections and reminiscences of living people about their past" (Sitton, Mehaffy & Davis, 1983, p. 5). For the purposes of this investigation, the "past" did not include all of the individual's experiences within the limits of her memory. Instead, her history was inclusive to the organization within which she works. Thus, the procedure was an oral history but with limitations. The

limitations included what was meant by history (past experiences within the organization), the protocol (although open-ended, the interviews were guided by key questions), and amount of interview time (the parameters were set between thirty and ninety minutes for each interview). The benefit of using oral histories was that both critical incidents and memorable messages were explored in breadth and depth during the interviews. I developed a preliminary protocol based on the above criteria (see Appendix A). Flanagan's (1954) basic format was utilized by including areas indicated by Stohl (1983).

Ives (1980) recommends that a minimum of two interviews per subject be conducted. The first interview provides data and the second, clarification and amplification. Sitten, et al (1983) suggest several additional reasons for conducting the second interview. These are: (1) the interviewee will have had time to recollect new information, (2) the interviewer will have had time to review her notes and the tape recording to discover loose ends, and so forth, (3) the interviewee and interviewer will know each other better and, thus, be more relaxed, and (4) the descriptions will be thicker. The process used in this investigation was to conduct two interviews with ten women employed within organizations. Each of the subjects and her organization met preset criteria.

Selection of Subjects and Organizations

Selection of subjects entailed criteria for the subjects and for the organization within which they work. First, I will present the organizational criteria and then the subject criteria. What did the organizations "look like?"

The organization had to be stable, that is, the organization had to have been operating long enough for it to have established norms. This insured that there was a culture into which the subjects had been socialized. Second, the organization had to have at least three levels within its hierarchical structure. Organizations with multiple levels provided dynamic contexts and, therefore, an increased number of directions from which the incidents or messages came. And, finally, the organization had to employ both males and females at all levels of the hierarchical structure. This insured a more typically structured environment into which the subjects were enculturated. Within the selected organizations, what were the criteria for the selection of subjects?

The criteria for the selection of subjects stem from my personal research interests and from a desire to meet the fundamental requirements for doing research. First, the subjects had to be female. What is known about people at the managerial level within most organizations is based on a male population. It is widely known that men make up a majority of the management force. Therefore, culture within these organizations is predominately shaped and set by men. There is no way of knowing whether that fact makes a significant difference to the enculturation process in organizations or not. And, I was not interested in making the discovery of significant differences between men and women. What I was interested in was how women are "fitting in" to the existing culture, albeit man-made.

Second, the subjects had to be at the managerial level within their respective organizations. Several related requirements evolved from this criterion. The subjects had to have been employed by the organization for at least one year to ensure that they had been enculturated into it. The

subjects could not be related to the owners, members of the board, or upper management. Relationship to a superior within the organization may have altered the usual socialization process.

Finally, the subjects could not be friends, colleagues, or personal acquaintances of mine. This criterion insured the subject confidentiality and an opportunity to offer honest and frank responses. The subjects could, however, have known me but only on a professional level. A possible subject sample had been located and was approached to verify whether or not they meet the above criteria.

I gathered a list of women who hold professional positions and had either taken informal courses from me within the past two years or were associates of those people who had. As a consultant, I had had the opportunity to interact with most people within the proposed sample. The major advantage of the selected sample was that I already established a professional relationship with them. As Hoopes (1979) and Rawlins (1981) point out, a professional image is conducive to effective interviewing. The next step was to analyze the gathered data.

Collection and Analysis of Data

Analysis of data was accomplished by qualitative methods. Several principles of qualitative research have been isolated by Van Maanen, Babbs & Faulkner, (1982) and served as a guideline for collecting and analyzing the data. They are, (1) Analytic Induction: I did not commit myself to a theoretical model. Categories and generalization were gathered from the data

rather than the data made to fit pre-existing categories. (2) Proximity: The collection of data was as close to the phenomenon as possible. Oral histories, however, are removed from the phenomena. Dean and Whyte (1970, p. 120) express this same concern:

The informant's statement represents merely the perceptions of the informant, filtered and modified by his (her) cognitive and emotional reactions and reported through his (her) personal verbal usages. Thus we acknowledge initially that we are getting merely the informant's picture of the world as (s)he sees it. (Italics theirs; non-sexist language mine.)

Still, oral histories are closer to the phenomenon than are other forms of data-gathering techniques, for example, questionnaires. (3) Ordinary Behavior: the data were gathered from real life experiences rather than created within a laboratory. (4) Structure as Ritual Constraint: people act in ways and perceive in ways that make sense to them. Thus, I had to rely on the subjects' perceptions more so than my own. And, (5) Descriptive Focus: the objective was to discover and describe rather than to explore and predict. I addressed the question, "What's going on here?"

A majority of the investigations of organizations have used quantitative methods. But, "quantity will not yield form" (Jonas, 1951, p. 334). Thus, rather than search for a quantity of messages, I attempted to discover themes. As Monge, et al (1984) put it, "the search for knowledge is a search for pattern in experience" (p. 22). To isolate themes I first placed on to sort cards excerpts from the interviewees' conversations that were accounts of messages or incidents that seem to have some bearing on their enculturation into the organization. By stacking and rearranging the sort cards into common issues, themes were isolated. I hoped to accomplish what Bochner (1981) describes as a productive methodological stance, that is, "to think about

phenomena incisively," he explains, "one must be able to combine imaginative and rigorous thinking; heart and head must go hand in hand" (p. 70). I then returned to the literature to aid in my incisiveness and meet Guion's (1973) challenge for researchers to make "a kind of zig-zag pattern of research, mixing purely descriptive and hypothesis testing studies" (p. 121). Thus, description was circular. First, I listened to the tapes, then transcribed them. Next, statements referring to the communication of cultural aspects were placed on cards. And then, I returned to the original tapes and notes to insure the validity of the thematic categories. Strick attention to consistency throughout this process was important because it increased the objectivity of the procedure (Van Maanen, et al, 1982; Flanagan, 1954; and Rawlins, 1981). Additionally, returning to the original data preserved its richness. Transcripts of language are not the same thing as spoken language. "In written language we stress words by underlining them in italics, but these are much clumsier devices than the rich nuances of spoken language-- tonal stress, pauses, gestures" (Watzlawick, 1977, p. 65). What were the results of the analysis?

Results

The data consisted of 430 pages of transcriptions and 45 minutes of untranscribed tapes. Statements made by the subjects referring to what was communicated to them during the enculturation process were transferred onto approximately five hundred sort cards. Analysis of data resulted in the isolation of fourteen major themes in five categories. The five categories concerned messages the subjects received from, sent to, or heard about (1) the organization, (2) superiors, (3) subordinates, (4) peers, and

(5) themselves. Messages in the fifth category, those received from, sent to, or heard about themselves, is the topic of the remainder of this paper. I selected only one category because discussing all five would be overwhelming for both me and the reader. Category five was chosen because it seemed most central to the topic of gender research within organizations.

Within category five, three major themes were isolated. These were (1) appearances, (2) the use of instincts, and (3) the use of meta-complimentary communication strategies. In this section I will discuss each of the findings and in the final section of this paper suggest the implications. First, middle management women and appearances.

If the Icing's Pretty, I'll Buy the Cake: Appearances and Work

All ten of the subjects were, in my opinion, physically attractive. Additionally, during the first round of interviews most subjects made reference to their own attractiveness. Thus, I decided to ask the participants if they thought their looks had anything to do with getting their jobs or their upward mobility. Overall, the answer was yes. Although this issue was addressed at length by many of the subjects, I will provide some of the more striking statements the subjects made about the affects of their physical appearance or dress on their careers.

S1: It certainly has an effect on how you interact with men. Whether you like it or not, it does. I mean, if you, most women want to be appreciated for their, what's up here (pointing to her head), and not what's surface, but that that has a bearing on, um, how far you go in management.

S2: I can come in here one day in a suit and the next day in jeans. Nobody cares. [S2 said, however, if the upper management or people from other offices were expected she did dress up. She was very well dressed the times I saw her.]

- S3: To a certain point. When we go to New York we must dress our best. As far as getting hired and promoted--no, they were that desperate; oh, I was dressed up. I don't know, it's hard to tell.
- S4: Because I appear feminine I may have a harder road to travel.
- S5: At first people kind of tended to disregard some of what I was saying because of how I dressed. The boss has a very, dress for power, black suits are power, as are navy suits. You wear the right bla, bla, bla. I think it is an initial thing. When I interviewed for the position I wore a skirt and blouse. You know, I'm not crazy.
- S6: I think it is positive. From the thing male to female. In this world we have mainly, in the professional classes, a lot of males. And I think as a female, the first that a male, if this is typical, "Oh, here comes a pretty female." And they are going to look at me first. Sometimes I think that's maybe some initial things that happen. But, that's all that a person needs is to get their foot in the door.
- S7: There is an awful lot of concern with how we look.--However, I think that it can hurt because I think that if a person is, particularly a woman, is attractive, a lot of times it is seen that there is nothing upstairs.
- S8: Your appearance has a grand effect on what people, and how they act toward you. But a lot of times I don't care. I don't always wear suits.--That sets some people off a little bit.
- S9: We even make a joke about it. We all show up on meeting days in a blue pin striped suit with a red tie and white shirt. And it is the company look. I think looks has a lot to do with it and I think it comes from the chairman of the board. He is very particular in his dress and being neat and clean and having a clean desk and the whole works. Personally, I think that my appearance has helped to get me recognized and make a good impression. If you are representing a clean and green product like we are you have to look nice. I think being attractive you will get hired. --(In our company) all the sales people are good looking.
- S10: (On top of doing a long list of activities) I work out a couple of times a week to try and keep this body in some kind of shape because I know that's important too.

Thus, women felt that attractiveness and dress were noticed in the organization. Sometimes they chose to pay attention to dressing up for work and at other times they "went for the comfort." When it comes to paying attention to their instincts, however, the subjects seem to pay attention most of the time.

Women's Intuition at Work

All of the subjects mentioned a reliance on "instincts" or "gut level" at some point during the interviews. Of these, three (S2, S4, & S7) made casual statements referring to this process. For example, S2 said that she didn't know why she knew women wouldn't be promoted into upper management, she "just knew." The other seven subjects had very concrete things to say about using something beyond logic in both their private and professional lives.

Here are their statements:

- S1: If my gut doesn't feel good about something then almost always I should stay away from it. When I defy that feeling I usually get my rear end in a lot of trouble. --I interview more on a gut level content more than looking at the exterior of the person. You have some pretty faces that will stab you in the back.--I've turned down jobs based on gut level.
- S3: I can use my instincts. You have to. Usually when I did I wasn't far off.
- S5: Initially when I am sizing up a person I do it on instinct. If then I am going to be working with that person and what have you, or depending on that person then I am probably going to try to find out some facts or watch how they actually perform for sure. I think I'm very instinctual and I rely on that heavily. I think I've always relied pretty heavily on it and trusted it.
- S6: You just have to believe within yourself. I think within every body we have capacities beyond what we really know.
- S8: The hostility toward me, I could feel it. The first day that I was here I could feel it.

S9: By the time they (a potential employee) get to me they have gone through personnel and she has weeded out people that don't have, on paper, the qualifications and so when hiring I'll pick the ones that I think will get along. So I think instinct, and I think, people in my office have told me, that I am better at reading their feelings and tuning into them than the man who was here before. I am much more supportive. A lot of times I can tune into them and then I have to ignore them because if I spent my whole day tuning into everybody I wouldn't get anything done or they would use me. So, I think that I use instinct a lot.

S10: I have a good gut level. And most of the time I'll find when I am making a gut decision I usually go with it.

Trusting their intuition was something the subjects said they learned while in middle management positions. Another behavior the subjects learned was to let those in power feel powerful.

You Catch Bees With Honey, Honey: Meta-Complementary Communication

Haley (1963) defines a meta-complementary relationship in the following way:

The person who establishes a meta-complementary relationship with another is controlling the maneuvers of the other and so controlling how the other will define the relationship. (p. 12)

At first brush the change in a woman's behavior from assertive and feminist to humble and feminine appears to simply be signs of hypocrisy. It was during my first interview session that this topic came up and at first I was appalled. However, as S1 continued with her explanation of the situation I realized that it, unfortunately, made sense. S1 told me that her previous supervisor, a female, used the same techniques and at that time it was very upsetting to her. This is how she described the situation:

I used to get very provoked with her (the boss), because she would do that- and I'd say "Why do you prostitute yourself? I refuse to prostitute myself." And she said to me one day, "You can call it prostitution, you can label it any way you

want. I'm not sleeping with any of them and I get everything that I want." She said, "I do what it takes to make them feel they're in control. I know they're not in control. I'm in control of them. They don't even know that I'm just carrying their noses around, you know."

Within two years, S1 was using the same technique. I asked her what the major reason for this was. She answered, "They (men) still hold the higher percentage of the work force, and they have a lot of clout and power over how far we (women) can go, and yes indeed, they can make your life miserable."

But, do many women resort to this?

As I listened to the first round of tapes, I realized that many of the subjects discussed similar tactics. More often than not, meta-complementary communication strategies seem to be used in relation to men more than to women, but not exclusively. Four of the women (S2, S3, S4, & S7) did not make any reference to meta-complementary communication. Of these, S2 said of the person in her office, "It was hard to work for him because of his ego problem and the control he thought he had." But because he lost interest in the office and did not work, middle management women just "did what we did." S7, on the other hand, said that she could never let her male boss think he had control because he didn't know how to handle power.

S3 said that she dealt with her power-oriented supervisor by ignoring him. And, S4 said that she would just throw papers until he would threaten to fire her. An interesting point is that almost all of these subjects mentioned that they did not believe that women would ever make it into upper management within their organizations.

As for the other six subjects, here is how they manage to survive by using meta-complementary communication strategies within the organization:

S1: I believe that honey, you know, you catch more bees with honey than you do with vinegar. And I, you know, when you are dealing with males that you know are sexist, I mean, let's face it, there are just certain tactics that you have to use and, unfortunately, they don't know when the bullshit is being spread on them but we know, and uh, that's why women, I feel, will always be able (laughs) to be smarter. They'll always be smarter. I mean, we really know how to manipulate. And, yeah, that's exactly correct, yeah.

You know, we know how to go around to get what we have to get, and you don't have to whore to do it. Um, and they don't even know when they're being snowed, I mean, until it's fallen, and then, they figure, "Oh, she's really a nice person." Nothing more than that. I also made sure that I involved them in all the areas in which I, I mean they, they, you know; first of all, when you're outgoing and nice, and just kind of mother sexist they really feel that you're bending to their whim. And you, and you have to make them think they're the ones in control. I mean, I'm convinced. This doesn't work with all men, I mean I'm not saying that--all, all males--but, but it certainly works with some--most (laughs)--most. And if you, if you make them feel that they're in control when in fact you know you are, then, yeah, it works every time. They are more amenable to finding out other things about you. Then you become very concrete with them. And they say, "Well, you know, she's intelligent too. You know, wow, she has a brain."

S5: Males are more into the power game and the whole structural thing than women are generally. Males expect you to be feminine. I could always get them to do whatever if I said "Would you please and bla, bla, bla," you know and played that whole little female role. As opposed to "This is what you need to do and here is how it should be done." That to me is much more straight forward and peer level. "Here it is and what do you think about it?" Males couldn't handle that normally. That would usually send them into all kinds of puffy-chested stuff they need to do.--I do it because the person needs controls and needs to know things. But it's things that I have set up and pretty much engineered to go a particular way. So, they are controlling it, but you have laid the ground rules and you are directing the way they are controlling it. Well that is setting up the outcome, and certainly once you set up outcomes, that's control.

It depended on what needed to be done and how important it was. If it was something that was kind of a routine thing that, yes indeed needed to be done, but was not earth shaking or really a high priority, then it would be here it is, and you do it, basically. In some instances where it is very important to get your goal accomplished then I would say well, I rather do it this other way (through meta-complementary strategies) because I'm sure I'll get it done this other way.

S6: I think that a person may need ego, you may let them think that they have all the control but the key is that they have to come back to you anyway and pick up the pieces. They always want control of the situation. Well, fine. That is a person in charge, let them be in charge in that situation. But, all in all, that person has to come back to me or to some female, because within that work setting, you have all the information and they are going to have to come back to you. So that, although they think ego wise they have control, they don't.

S8: If there is a project to be done, which we have several right now going on, and (the boss) would say for us to figure out what you want to do, split it up, I don't because it isn't worth any problems. So, I just go around it. It doesn't bother me.

S9: At home, I'm married and I'll have an idea but make my husband think that it is his idea to get my way.--Well, I have gained control by letting my boss think he has it a lot. Making him think that it was his idea.

S10: I'd bend over backwards. Go over there, make special times. I used to get sick to my stomach. Sit down with him, and say "Okay, can we walk through this? Is this okay? Should I do it this way?"--But I figured it was the only way to win him over.--And, that seems to be the way to handle him.

The subjects are paying attention to their appearances, intuition, and ways of communicating in order to fit into organizations. What are the implications of these findings and what future research do they suggest?

Implications and Suggestions

I will discuss the implications of the procedures and the results. Each of these categories represents choices that I made about what to do, how to do it, how to interpret it, and how to value it while carrying out this investigation. Throughout this final section I will explain those choices, what I might have done differently, and make suggestions for future research based on those alternative choices. First, the procedures.

The Procedures

Both critical incidents (CI) and memorable messages (MM) refer to messages the individual gets from within the work environment that helps him/her to better fit in or understand his/her job. As far as the CI's and MM's worth beyond that of being methods, they are not of much value. CIs do not provide any format for gathering the data and MM uses a questionnaire that limits the kinds of responses one could gather. As foundations, or perspectives, however, both of these methods helped me to recognize what had affected the subjects and what had not. Both methods provided me with an initial communication-orientation that would allow for both verbal and nonverbal messages to be of value.

Next, I selected oral histories as a procedure for gathering CIs and MMs. I feel about this procedure the way that I believe Studs Terkel (1972) did when he used it. As he explained it:

I was the beneficiary of others' generosity. My tape recorder, as ubiquitous as the carpenter's tool chest or the doctor's black satchel, carried away valuables beyond price. (p. xviii.)

The major flaw in taking oral histories is that one is left up to his/her abilities and predispositions when it comes to analyzing the data once it is gathered. In my opinion, though, more investigations should be done using this procedure. First, by going directly to a source and asking questions the researcher has available a wealth of information that sending out questionnaires or doing lab studies cannot provide. Oral histories add both depth and breadth to the data.

How the subjects respond sometimes says more than the content of the response. More times than I can count I was given nonverbal as well as verbal replies to my questions. Sometimes a twinkle of an eye, a curling of the lips,

or a glance to the ceiling would signal an attitude beyond the reply. All of this would have never been captured if not for my direct experience of it at the time.

Research should be an exciting and interesting event. Although waiting for questionnaires to return and anticipating whether or not the twenty volunteer undergraduates will show up can be exciting, it still is not the same as going out to where the data grow naturally. Doing interviews is both physically and emotionally exhausting because it uses a lot of energy to take full advantage of it. I found that at the end of three interviews in a given day I was ready to rest. But, then I would begin to contemplate something that was said, laugh at an innuendo that was made, or enjoy anew the memory of a subject's face and, therefore, still be gathering data after the fact. To put it simply, data gathering was both enjoyable and exhausting.

There is one final advantage to oral histories: they provide a total communication event. That is, they allow the investigator to gather both verbal and nonverbal information about and from the subjects and they also provide an understanding of the setting in which the phenomenon occurs. My first suggestion for future research is to use the procedure of taking oral histories. Once we have a better description of what is going on, then perhaps we can begin to make better guesses about why.

The selection of subjects is the next area from which implications were made. I contacted women who had been in my consulting program classes or their female colleague. This method was good because it insured that the subjects would view me as a professional. Although I would suggest that others use a similar process for gathering subjects, I realize this holds little probability.

The organizational setting was a very good place to study enculturation. Organizations provide an environment in which people function as individuals at times, create and maintain social and interpersonal relationships, interact in small groups, and cope with some rules, regulations, and norms that stem from the setting itself. The setting did, however, shape what could be found as well. A suggestion I would make for future research, especially that concerned with gender differences, is for a similar study be done in a different setting and/or with a different sample. Several alternative studies might be beneficial for discovering more about the enculturation process. Those that involve varying the subjects, setting, or procedure are as follows:

1. Similar sample, different setting.
Same procedure as suggested above. What kind of messages would a woman newcomer into a bridge club receive?
2. Similar sample, similar setting, different procedures.
By using the themes that evolved in this study to develop a questionnaire, would the findings be similar?
3. Similar sample, different setting, different procedures.
Would similar findings evolve from a study using women as a sample, a bridge club as a setting, and a questionnaire as a procedure?
4. Different sample, same setting, same procedures.
Would men's experiences in the organization appear to be similar to women's if this study were repeated with males as the subjects?
5. Different sample, similar setting, and different procedures.
What kinds of findings would evolve if men in organizations were studied by having them fill out a questionnaire created from this study's implications?
6. Different sample, different setting, and same procedures.
Would a man who just joined the Elk's club be found to have similar messages given to him as a newcomer?
7. Different sample, different setting, and different procedures.
Would blacks responding to a questionnaire created from this study's findings who have recently joined an all white church congregation have similar messages given to them about how to fit in?

The answers to the above questions would help provide a better understanding of how culture is transmitted in any given society.

The Findings

The findings reported in this paper centered around three major themes: appearances, intuition, and meta-complimentary communication strategies. What do these findings imply and what suggestions can be made? First, appearances:

An attractive appearance is something that has consistently been shown to have positive effects on a person's life in numerous studies in the past. Some of these are in reference to physical attractiveness (Berscheid and Walster, 1974; Byrne, London, and Reeves, 1968; Dion, Berscheid, and Walster, 1972), some to attire or dress (Douty, 1963; Raymond and Unger, 1972; Rosenfeld and Plax, 1977) and others on perceived personality (Aiken, 1963; Cavior and Dokecki, 1972). Again, I would conclude that this is not a sex-specific finding.

Although the women in this study referred to males in upper management as more likely to hire attractive women, it is well known that attractive people in general have a more positive affect on others. Accordingly, attractive people at times, receive attention and favors that unattractive people would not. Thus, the finding that appearances and dress were discovered as meaningful within organizations supports previous investigation. The second finding, intuition use, however, has not been adequately studied in the past.

Women use intuition to make many of their decisions within the organizational setting. I am not sure if this is so much new news as it is new admission. The notion of "women's intuition" has been part of folklore throughout time. To the best of my knowledge, however, this is the first time that professional women have admitted that they rely on intuition to make

decisions. I see this as a very healthy discovery. First, this finding demonstrates that women in management positions are becoming more secure about themselves. I seriously doubt that a lot of male managers would admit to using this non-logic based method of decision-making. Second, this finding strongly demonstrates that messages are sent and received by communicators within themselves and across environments.

According to my perspective on communication, messages are sent to, from and through individuals, groups, and societies. Further, I would advance the notion that what arises from the coalescence of the individuals, groups and societies interacting, the emergent quality, has message value. What women may be labeling "intuition," "instinct," or "gut level" may be partially a product of what it means to be an animal and partially a product of being able to interpret nonverbal cues along with past knowledge to accurately assess a present condition. Although there is no way to support or prove this claim at this time, it is worthy of drawing at least one conclusion beyond those already mentioned: middle management women may eventually have some advantages over middle management males because they are willing to do on a "guess." People who take risks may be more likely to succeed. If their guess was right, they win. And if their guess turns out wrong, they have the advantage of having tried and gained the strengths that come from facing adversity.

The use of intuition at work is interesting for an additional reason. It points to the fact that people tend to reconstruct the knowledge by which they make decisions. That is, perhaps both men and women use intuition to make decisions but when asked "how" they offer an answer that fits into some form of logic. People tend to want a neat and clean answer and intuition does not provide one.

Recently I asked a group of twelve people in a seminar how many made decisions using their "gut level." There were four men and eight women present. Seven of the women and none of the men said they used their intuition. Is this true in general or was it simply a function of that particular group? I suspect that if men claim to not use it they may eventually lose the ability to do so. Future researchers should begin to investigate the use of intuition for making decisions in a variety of settings. In order to clarify the question of who uses intuition and under what circumstances, intrapersonal communication needs studying.

Meta-complementary communication strategies are used by middle management women to gain control of what goes on in their organizations. Thus, women are placed in paradoxical situations within organizations. Being feminine is not professional and being professional is not feminine. Finding that women are escaping a paradox by walking a tightrope was both surprising and discouraging. This finding flies in the face of what the popular feminist literature tells women about how to get ahead; in fact, it runs exactly counter to that advice. The only saving grace about this finding is that it is insulting to women and men alike. Otherwise, it is unsettling news.

Yerys (1977) claimed that women have trouble being assertive for one of three reasons. First, they tend to avoid success; second, they try to avoid conflict; and third, they strive for approval. Prior to this investigation I would have, perhaps, argued against these claims. Now, however, I would argue the claims are still wrong, but for different reasons than I would have given before.

I do not think that women are avoiding success or conflict; nor are they striving for approval. Women are being perceived this way because traditional sex-typed behaviors are being analyzed according to out-dated perspectives

concerning gender roles (Gilligan, 1982). Women are using "old" behaviors for new reasons. As Dock (1978) stated, "Since men in bureaucracies prefer that women remain passive and 'womanly,' women generally hide a great deal of their personalities from men" (p. 48). It appears that there is more truth to this than Dock realized.

Women are using their knowledge about gender stereotypes to accomplish their objectives in organizations. Women are not doing this to avoid success, to avoid conflict, or to strive for approval. They are simply doing what they have to in order to place themselves in positions where they will eventually have enough power and success to be able to use it more advantageously.

The subjects who had turned to meta-complementary strategies tried alternative methods first. They assumed that if they were assertive, if they knew their jobs, and if they worked twice as hard as the man next to them they would get rewarded. This was a naive attitude. As other findings have pointed out, organizations have been created by men and they tend to structure in hierarchies. Women with equal positions are not as powerful as their male counterparts because they tend to structure in horizontals and webs (Kanter, 1976 & 1977). Women, therefore, were in the right game with the wrong rules. After bumping their heads on the hierarchy's ceiling, the subjects in this study realized that the only way to succeed was to play the game according to the rules set up by the "founding fathers."

Dixon (1976) noted that "men continue to hold more restrictive attitudes than women about female employment in spite of a general liberalization of views" (p. 28). As such, men want women to act like women and not like men. The management role, however, is defined in male terms. The only way a woman can act like a manager is to first use traditionally female behaviors to

lure the organization's men into her web, and then show them that she "has a brain," as one subject put it. Hopefully, over time women will move into enough influential and powerful positions that they will begin to change the organizations' structures and be able to shed this feminine skin and show their true colors.

Meta-complementary communication strategies are being used by women to gain and maintain power within organizations. Do men also use them? I would guess that they do. The primary difference might be that men may have to act less "male" to do this where a woman must act more "female." I think it would be interesting to discover if such strategies are used in other contexts. Meta-complementary communication strategies are used in relationships (Haley, 1963) and organizations. Are they used in any setting where relationships evolve along with the process of enculturation? These would make interesting areas for future investigations.

Conclusion

From the data gathered during the taking of oral histories of ten middle management women, fourteen themes evolved. These were then structured into five categories. The category discussed in this paper was one centered on the messages the subjects sent to, received from, or heard about themselves. The three themes presented were (1) appearances, (2) intuition, and (3) meta-complimentary communication strategies.

Although I, as a woman, might be discouraged by the third finding, that women in middle management positions have to use communication strategies that do not represent a feminist orientation, I believe that as women advance into upper management positions, the strategies will change. As S1 put it, "You

gotta' look how far you've come and then reach for the sky!" By taking a closer look at gender differences, and similarities, we are beginning to be more aware of how communication shapes and preserves the way women and men view themselves and each other. Hopefully, our findings will help us bridge the differences, discover the similarities, and appreciate both.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL*

"Think of a time that someone said something to you that indicated to you what you should do in order to succeed at this job or in order for you to fit in around here." (Pause until the subject has an incident in mind.)

"Did this statement cause a significant change in the way you behaved on your job or the way you felt about it?"

(If the answer is "NO," say) "I wonder if you could think of the last time that someone did or said something that did affect your behavior or feelings about your job—that is, made you realize what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior for this job?"

(When the subject has such a situation in mind ask the following. Allow the subject to carry the conversation unless she strays very far from the intended purpose of this study.)

1. "What were the general circumstances leading up to this incident?"
2. "Tell me exactly what this person did or said that was so helpful (harmful) at that time."
3. "Why was it so helpful/hurtful in changing your behavior?"
4. "When did this incident happen?"
5. "What was the other person's job?"
6. "How long had s/he been on the job?"
7. "What was your relationship to him/her?"
8. "Why do you suppose this incident had such a strong effect?"
9. "What, if any, effect did this have on your behavior outside of this organization?"
10. "Since that incident, have you told other new employees the same thing? Why or why not?"

*This protocol was adapted from one suggested by John C. Flanagan in "The Critical Incident Technique," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 51, No. 4, July, 1954 with suggestions from Cynthia Stohl in "You Can't Understand Us Unless You Dust Our Shelves: The Role of Memorable Messages in Organizational Socialization," unpublished paper presented at Eastern Communication Association meeting, Ocean City, Md., May 1, 1983.

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